

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

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OASD/ISA:MR. BADER

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R 082223Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:ETRD, MCAF, CG

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE GOZ PURCHASE OF CHINOOK HELICOPTERS

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING FEBRUARY VISIT TO KINSHASA, BOEING-VERTEL REMAINS HOPEFUL OF SELLING CHINOOK HELICOPTERS TO ZAIRE BUT, HAVING COMMITTED PRODUCTION RESOURCES IN EXPECTATION ZAIRIAN ORDER, NEEDS PURCHASE DECISION SOON. AMBASSADOR MAY CONSIDER RAISING WITH MOBUTU. END SUMMARY.

2. STUART DODGE OF BOEING-VERTEL HAS BRIEFED AF/C ON RESULTS OF FEBRUARY VISIT TO KINSHASA BY 5-MAN BOEING TEAM TO DISCUSS SALE OF 6 CHINOOK HELICOPTERS, IN WHICH GOZ FIRST EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SEPTEMBER 1973. BOEING-VERTEL HAD HOPED FOR SALE BY JANUARY 1, 1974 AND HAD PROMISED ACCELERATED DELIVERY SCHEDULE IF ORDER RECEIVED BY THAT DATE. TEAM VISITED KINSHASA TO DETERMINE REASON FOR DELAY AND TO TRY TO SPEED PURCHASE DECISION. ACCORDING TO DODGE, COMPANY
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HAS ALREADY COMMITTED RESOURCES TO SUPPLYING ZAIRE PER

FOLLOWING DELIVERY SCHEDULE: ONE IN APRIL 1975, ONE JULY 1975, TWO DECEMBER 1975, ONE JANUARY 1976, AND ONE MARCH 1976. DODGE SAID COMPANY NEEDS ORDER SOON, HOPEFULLY BY APRIL FIRST (ASSUMING TWO MORE MONTHS WILL THEN BE NEEDED FOR GOZ TO ARRANGE FINANCING) IF DELIVERY SCHEDULE IS TO BE PRESERVED IN FACE PRESENT WORLDWIDE DEMAND FOR CHINOOKS.

3. DURING KINSHASA VISIT, BOEING GROUP MET WITH GENERAL

BABIA, COLONEL KIKUNDA-OMBALA (HEAD OF SODIMAZ), AND COLONEL WOBOLI (PROCUREMENT).

4. IN CORDIAL MEETING WITH BABIA, BOEING GROUP WAS TOLD GOZ STILL INTERESTED IN CHINOOKS BUT HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER IT COULD AFFORD THEM (PRESENT TALKING FIGURE IS ABOUT 25 MILLION DOLLARS FOR TOTAL PACKAGE, INCLUDING TRAINING, DELIVERY, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, ETC.) BABIA SAID DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE BY PRESIDENT AND THAT HE WOULD RAISE MATTER AS SOON AS MOBUTU RETURNED KINSHASA. BOEING GROUP TRIED IMPRESS ON BABIA NEED FOR EARLY DECISION BUT, TO AVOID SEEMING APPLY PRESSURE, DID NOT SET DEADLINE.

5. GROUP FOUND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS WITH WOBOLI AND KIKUNDA-OMBALA BOTH ENCOURAGING. WOBOLI EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF DRAFT PURCHASE AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH DODGE SUSPECTS HE WILL QUESTION SOME POINTS WHEN AND IF PURCHASE DECISION IS MADE. KIKUNDA-OMBALA SHOWED ENTHUSIASM FOR CHINOOK, AND VISIT TO HIS OPERATIONS CENTER CONVINCED BOEING GROUP THAT SODIMAZ COULD HANDLE IT. GROUP IMPRESSED WITH TIGHTNESS OF KIKUNDA'S OPERATION, ABILITY OF ZAIRIAN HELICOPTER PILOTS (FLYING PUMAS AND ALOUETTES), MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, EQUIPMENT USAGE LEVEL (FLYING HOURS/MONTH), ETC.

6. DODGE AWARE OF NO ACTIVITY BY COMPETITORS. SAID SIKORSKY CH 53 ONLY REAL RIVAL TO CHINOOK. AGREED THOUGH THAT FRENCH SALESMAN MIGHT BE ABLE MAKE CASE FOR SMALLER "SUPER FRELON", ARGUING STANDARDIZATION ADVANTAGES OF KEEPING HELICOPTER FLEET FRENCH. DODGE DISCOUNTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSSIBILITY OF ZAIRIAN INTEREST IN SOVIET MIL 8, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS LESS SOPHISTICATED THAN CHINOOK AND HAVING DISADVANTAGE OF SMALLER LOADED/EMPTY WEIGHT RATIO.

7. COMMENT. VIEW BOEING-VERTEL'S APPARENTLY REAL NEED FOR TIMELY PURCHASE DECISION BY ZAIRE, AMBASSADOR MAY WISH TO CONSIDER MENTIONING IF APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY ARISES DURING HIS FORTHCOMING CALL ON PRESIDENT MOBUTU.

(DEPARTMENT DID NOT REPEAT NOT SUGGEST THIS POSSIBILITY
TO DODGE.) AS POST AWARE, OF COURSE, NO REPEAT NO FMS
CREDIT WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO FINANCE CHINOOK PURCHASE.
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